

## M E R C A T O R :

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## Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

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*From Thursday, July 9. to Saturday, July 11. 1713.*

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*No Case so well represented as by those that feel it.**This is the Reason why Letters sent from several Parts are Printed in this Paper.**A third Letter from Scotland, Signed by the Principal Merchants in Edinburgh, representing the miserable State of Scotland, for want of their Trade to France.**Another about the Fishery, promised in the next; which ends the Part of the Scots Trade.*

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**N**O Man can so feelingly express the Circumstances which afflict another, as the Person himself, who is afflicted, and therefore Physicians and Surgeons choose to speak with the Patient himself, if possible, that they may have a true Account from his own Mouth of what aggrieves him.

In like manner it is not probable, that any Author or Writer should describe so exactly, or express so lively, and with so feeling a Sense, the Loss, tho' but for a time, which the delay of the late Treaty of Commerce must necessarily be to the respective Parts of Great-Britain, where our Trading People reside, as may be done by the Inhabitants, Traders, Manufacturers and Merchants of those Parts themselves.

For this Reason, being to speak of the Share or Part Scotland will have in the Misfortune of this Bill, and several Letters and Representations of their Circumstances being sent up, as well to the Writer of this Paper, as to private Persons, complaining of the Condition they are reduced to, and the yet worse Circumstances they are like to fall into, on this Account: The *MERCATOR* cannot do better, than to represent their Case in their own Words; or to speak more properly, to give them the occasion of setting forth their Circumstances in their own Terms.

To this end, Two Letters or Papers received on that Subject, have already been made Publick; and as several more are already come to hand, equally Significant, and all confirming from Scotland, what has been already asserted here, of Britain in general, (*viz.*) That the French Trade has been advantageous to them, and would again have been so, had the Articles lately in Debate

been made Effectual; and that by the failure thereof, the Dutch will now have the Profit of the whole Trade: These Things being so lively represented in these Letters, and so exactly agreeing with the Matter of Fact, the *MERCATOR* cannot think, but it will be very acceptable to go on a little further in the same manner; and let the Trade and Interests of every part of the Country be represented by themselves: And for this Reason the following Paper is published, being part of a Letter sent up from Edinburgh to a Gentleman of Scotland now here, and Signed by the most eminent Merchants and Traders in that City.

Dear Sir,

“ **W**E wrote you last Post, and since have the Honour of yours, of the 19th Courant, giving an Account of the Tenour and Import of the Commerce-Bill, now thrown out in the House of Commons; and, that some Gentlemen now at London, are pleased to say, that the Thoughts of our principal Merchants here quadrate therewith; which they have no Reason to suggest of us: And since you desire our Opinion anent this Affair, we shall humbly give it you, without any Prejudice or Partiality.

“ As to what we conceive of the 8th and 9th Articles of the Treaty, and of the Bill to make them Effectual, we believe, with all Submission, the Bill was very wisely and properly adapted for the Benefit of our Commerce, and with abundance of Caution, as keeping close to the Import of the Tariff; and especially in that it was therein declared and provided, that we should have equal Privileges with the Dutch, or any the most Favoured, whereby we might have still expected to have been on as good a foot as any of them, if not somewhat better: only there is an Objection made by some here, (*Viz.*) That leaving





to the Queen to set aside the Bill, is the same with leaving it to Her to take what Terms and Concessions the French would be pleased to give. This Objection, as it favours very much of Disrespect and want of due Confidence in the Queen, and those entrusted by Her; so at the Bottom we conceive it to be ill-founded, because by the very Nature of the Bill, there are plain Conditions and Restrictions, without Performance of which, no reciprocal Agreement can be made.

Upon the whole, we are of Opinion, that the Passing of the Bill had been very much for the Advantage and Interest of this Country; and, that the Loss of it cannot choose but have the contrary Effects. We must have French Wines and Brandy, cost what it will, and Salt for our Fishing, and for this have no Product as Matters now stand, which we can depend upon will turn to any Account in France: Grain is a very uncertain Commodity, and probably they will not want it; our Lead cannot be sent, but with a considerable Loss; our Woollen Manufactures, and Dry-Fish, prohibited; our Herrings under such Duties as are equal to a Prohibition; our Salmon highly raised in the Duties, and not in Demand; and, in a Word, nothing we can send but wherein the Dutch may serve them 40 per Cent. cheaper, with Profit: So that how, or by what occasion, the Gentlemen of our Country, who approve of its being thrown out, have been induced and brought into such Measures, seems as yet very mysterious to us. And tho' we think it may be a very difficult Step to retrieve what is already done, yet we presume your Country will owe you their Dutiful Acknowledgments, if you and all the Worthy and Honourable Gentlemen of this Country, who have a Sense of the heavy Burthens and Calamities under which this part of the Nation groans; and without some Providential Relief, must unavoidably sink, would, in a convenient Season, exert your selves, and use your utmost Endeavours to get this so Important an Affair set at rights again, and redress'd by all means possible; being hopeful, that after a due Consideration and Reflection upon the State and Circumstances of it, those Gentlemen of this Country, who differ'd from you, especially the Trading Men, may be brought to another Notion of it, than what they have hitherto entertained.

For however it may be as to England, we know not; we know indeed their Pretences for the Silk Manufactures and for the Portugal Trade, tho' we may not perhaps be allowed to be proper Judges of those Things: How far it may be disadvantageous to other Tradesmen, Artificers and Manufacturers, not depending on any of these, we shall not take upon us to determine, because not acquainted with these Matters; but as for what concerns a Trade by this Country with France, upon the Treaty of 1664. and

according to the Pretensions in the Bill of Commerce, we presume to say, and we hope they will not refuse it, that it might be beneficial to this Country, as Experience has proven it in past Times to be; and that we may have a Ballance returning to us yearly in Cash from our Exports, in lieu of what we must necessarily send out, or pay in Bills drawn on us for the value of our Imports, such as Wines, Brandies, Salt, &c. while the Dutch will be driving a Trade in what we should Export to very good Advantage.

Our Merchants are not so easily convey'd, as whereby we could have all their Opinions to send you by this Post, otherwise it had been done; mean while the most considerable are very sorry the Bill is thrown out, and will write their Thoughts to their Friends about it. We subscribe our selves,

S I R,

Your faithful Humble Servants.

This Letter speaks the Sense of the Merchants in Scotland so plainly, that it would be needless to add any thing farther: And tho' many more Letters of like nature are come to hand from other Parts of Scotland, setting forth the Loss in general to the Trade of Scotland, indeed it might be said the Ruin of Scotland by the Disappointment of the Treaty of Commerce, and its being delayed so long as till the next Parliament; yet this may suffice as to the general.

The next *MERCATOR* shall offer one Letter more relating to the Fishery there, and then shall leave that part of Britain, and direct the Eyes of the Reader to our own Country; where, tho' it is the Happiness of the People not to be yet so impoverish'd as in other Parts, yet the Burthen falls as heavy in proportion.

#### ERRATA in the Last.

Col. 1. last line, dele to the present purpose. Col. 2. l. 30. for all read *anc.* Ib. l. 31. for *Hereton* i. *Heretors.* Ib. last line but 7. for *Laird Saltoun* r. *Laird of Saltoun*

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